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FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2010

## Great turnout

Easter Egg hunt draws big crowds.  
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## Plane flips

Mock-emergency landing turns real for pilot. Page 5

## Hand-in-hand

Strategic alliance could bode well for city's future. Page 4

## Back in the ring

Former city councillor ready to take shot at politics once again. Page 8

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# INPORT NEWS

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### ECONOMY HAS CHANGED

## Look beyond factories

DAVE JOHNSON  
 InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — The city shouldn't rely on chasing after smokestacks anymore, a consultant with Miller Dickinson Blais Inc. is telling residents, business owners and politicians.

"The economy has changed a lot in the last decade, the focus is very different today," said Brock Dickinson.

see SMOKESTACKS | Page 2

### MULTI-MODAL PORT: Port company forms strategic alliance to increase cargo shipments from city

## Turning into a true port city

DAVE JOHNSON  
 InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — A strategic alliance between two companies could lead to Port Colborne becoming the first multi-modal port on the Great Lakes.

Snider Dock Services and Quebec Stevedoring Company Ltd. are working together to ship goods through the Great Lakes, said Ken Snider.

Through that alliance, cargo is already piling up on the east pier of the Welland Canal in Port Colborne, said Snider, president of Snider Dock Services.

That cargo is giant wind turbine towers from Fort Erie-based DMI Industries.

"We'll have 45 sections here soon," said Snider.

see TOWERS | Page 2

DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Giant wind turbine towers are unloaded on the east pier of the Welland Canal in Port Colborne. Snider Dock Services and Quebec Stevedoring Company Ltd. are working together to ship goods, like the wind turbines, through the Great Lakes.



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■ **SMOKESTACKS:** Chasing factories doesn't work anymore

# City has its advantages

FROM PAGE 1

Millier Dickinson Blais Inc. is working with the City of Port Colborne and its economic development office to develop an economic development plan for the city.

Dickinson made his remarks during an economic development meeting at city hall Tuesday. His presentation was called Economic Development 2.0.

Paul Blais, also spoke, and focused on advantages and disadvantages the city has when it comes to attracting new business and jobs, and what priorities it should set for the future.

Dickinson started off his presentation talking about the 'old' economic development model; one that started in the 1920s in Georgia. Georgia Power was looking to increase its profit and looked at who its major customers were. The utility recognized factories were the biggest clients and the ones that were paying the most. So, Georgia Power started chasing after factories, trying to attract as many to the state as it could.

"Other companies started to do the same and then municipalities started to do it as well. It was called smokestack chasing and it was the dominant model across North America in the '50s, '60s and '70s. In the '80s things started to change."

And when the change started to take place, Dickinson said, many communities were not prepared for it. Communities such as Flint, Mich., which relied heavily on manufacturing, started to see factories close down. And despite the closures, officials in Flint

believed they could attract other companies to fill those vacant buildings. But no other companies came and the city started to die.

"At one time Detroit had a population of close to two million people, today it's around 800,000. There are huge sections of the city that have been left empty."

Dickinson said neither Flint nor Detroit learned to adapt to the changes and the new economy that was emerging.

He said adapting to change is hard, and talked about something he called the Napoleon Factor — doing something the same because it's always been done that way.

When Napoleon was invading European countries in the 1800s, the English, Dickinson said, were worried about an invasion of their island nation. So they set up a person on a beach to watch for an invasion fleet and if that person saw a fleet of ships, they would ring a bell. When people in a nearby village heard that bell, they would start to ring church bells and the next town would want to do the same.

That alert system was left in place until 1945.

Dickinson said municipalities have to realize they can't do things the same way they used to.

After talking about other economic theories and concepts, Dickinson said Port Colborne needs to position itself to take advantage of the new economy.

Blais, also of Millier Dickinson Blais Inc. said the city has a number of advantages when it comes to the new economy and creating jobs. Those

**You understand what businesses need; are you guys getting that businesses are a customer of the municipality.**

Paul Blais of Millier Dickinson Blais Inc.

advantages include: access to rail and the Welland Canal, a business-friendly approach, being a regional leader in manufacturing and having the highest number of residents in apprenticeships and trades.

But with those advantages come disadvantages, he said.

The city's disadvantages, according to Blais, include a stagnant population — the population has stayed virtually the same since 1991 — low levels of university-educated residents, a lack of harmony on local-regional goals, a lack of shovel-ready industrial land and uncertainty over healthcare services.

Despite the disadvantages, Blais said, people are the real strength when it comes to economic growth.

"Growth can happen by having the right people in the right businesses and you have that in spades in Port Colborne."

He said Port Colborne is also a city that understands the need to help existing business retain jobs and employees.

"You understand what businesses need; are you guys getting that businesses are a customer of the municipality."

djohnson@wellandtribune.ca

■ **TOWERS:** Wind turbines sitting on pier

# Badawey says it's great news

FROM PAGE 1

He didn't know the final destination of the towers, but expected them to be sitting on the pier for a while before being shipped out.

In addition to the towers, three giant piles of trap rock are sitting on the pier across from West St.

Snider said the trap rock is being used by Dufferin Construction Co. for reconstruction of the QEW. The material will be part of the top course of asphalt on the highway.

"You can't get it (trap rock) in this area and it's easier to ship it in (to Port Colborne) than truck it in," Snider said.

Snider Dock Services also ships in salt, which is stored on the west pier of the canal between the city yard and ADM Milling, and had been shipping in gypsum.

Snider said the gypsum probably won't be coming back this year. The gypsum sat on the east pier in the same area the wind turbine towers are now being stored.

Snider Dock Services and Quebec Stevedoring are also sharing an area at Port Weller. Snider said over-dimensional cargo — large cargo — such as boilers from St. Catharines company is being shipped out from the Port Weller location the two companies share.

"Quebec Stevedoring has 23 facilities on the Great Lakes and a really good company to work with. We're expanding what we do with them and we're doing a lot more quoting on jobs," he said.

Snider said Trillium Railway Co. Ltd. is looking at putting a rail line back into Port Colborne property. A rail line is said to run into the property back when Canada Furnace Co. was in operation.

Snider said a new rail line would truck smoke Port Colborne's multi-modal port on the Great Lakes, with rail, road and water all coming together.

He said the city and Niagara Region are behind the idea.

Mayor Vance Badawey said having a multi-modal port would reinforce the recent decision by the province to make the region the location of the only Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre in the province.



Vance Badawey

A gateway is a geographic area through which significant incoming and outgoing transport/trade flows are distributed by means of transfer and transshipment.

"One of the reasons we were chosen is because of our port-related infrastructure. Water, rail and road are Port Colborne's strengths," said Badawey.

Making the area a gateway zone gives the city a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions and can help usher in a 'new economy' to the area.

"Niagara has been dependent on the manufacturing industry as No. 1 industry and the 'new economy' suggests investments like this will help the area."

Badawey said the multi-modal port and gateway zone will fit in well with the city's new economic development strategy now in development. With a multi-modal port, there's more incentive and more advantages for new business to set up in Port Colborne or Niagara.

Existing business can also take advantage of the port.

"Companies that have plants in other locations can look at consolidating in our area because of our transportation infrastructure. We have the means to move trade globally," the mayor said.

He said the partnership between Snider Dock Services and Quebec Stevedoring Company Ltd. is great news and is only the tip of the iceberg for Port Colborne.

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■ GREAT WEATHER: 14/15 benton sans comp book

# Great turnout for Easter Egg hunt in Port

ALLAN BENNER  
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Christal Langerak recalls some pretty cold and blustery Easter Sundays in the past — and a few nice days, too.

"But we've never had weather this great," said Langerak, manager of the Nutty Chocolatier on West St. "This is wonderful."

She said hundreds of excited children arrived on West St., Sunday morning for the business' seventh annual Easter egg hunt.

But that's not unusual. Even when it's been cold and snowy, Langerak said the business has "always had a really good turnout. ... We've always had strong numbers."

"It's nice to see so many people come out."

The municipality closed the street to traffic to allow the young egg hunters to scour the road for the brightly-painted stones they collected. Those stones were then exchanged for bags filled with Easter treats.

Langerak said the Nutty Chocolatier started holding the event as a way to give something back to the community that supports the family-run business throughout the year.

Even this year, amidst job losses in an area that has been hard hit by the recession, she said the community has continued to support the business.

"It's been very busy. At first I was a little bit concerned (about the economy), but it seemed to work out well. In this community, most people shop local, and that's nice."

She said businesses had the same concerns at Christmas, and were relieved to see that Port Colborne and area shoppers support their local businesses then, too.

Langerak was impressed with how polite their young guests were. "I had all these kids coming up to me and saying 'Thank you,'" she noted.

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ALLAN BENNER Staff Photos

In the photos clockwise from above: A boy collects coloured rocks on West St. during the Nutty Chocolatier's seventh annual Easter egg hunt Sunday; children rush out as the hunt gets underway; and three-year-old Jared Little gets a big hug from the Easter Bunny



# INPORT NEWS

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## ourview

### Strategic alliance and economic development strategy go hand-in-hand

A strategic alliance between two companies could lead to Port Colborne becoming the first multi-modal port on the Great Lakes.

Snider Dock Services and Quebec Stevedoring Company Ltd. are working together to ship goods through the Great Lakes, said Ken Snider.

Through that alliance, cargo is already piling up on the east pier of the Welland Canal in Port Colborne, said Snider, president of Snider Dock Services.

That cargo is giant wind turbine towers from Port Erie-based DMJ Industries. Giant piles of trap rock already sit on the pier and Snider's company has shipped in gypsum in years past.

Snider said Trillium Railway Co. Ltd. is looking at putting a rail line back into the property.

A rail line used to run into the property back when Canada Furnace Co. was in operation.

A new rail line would truly make Port Colborne a multi-modal port on the Great Lakes, with rail, road and water all coming together, both Snider and Mayor Vance Badawey said.

We're glad to see those wind turbines and rock piling up on the east pier.

It means new business — and maybe even new jobs — is coming to the lakeside.

Business that is sorely needed in today's economy. And with the city's economic development strategy currently underway, this kind of business is something Port Colborne needs to welcome and expand upon.

City officials, residents and business owners were recently told that chasing after factories is no longer viable in today's new economy.

Expanding existing businesses is one way to help keep jobs and bring new jobs into the community, consultants from Miller Dickinson Blais Inc. said.

Attracting new businesses and new jobs to the city could be made easier because of the alliance between Snider and Quebec Stevedoring.

A bustling port and a bustling city might make companies start to take notice of the lakeside city.

A busy city can be attractive to companies looking to relocate.

And that could only mean good things for Port Colborne.

## ■ CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: Flag raised over city hall



Sharon Leavers, of the Port Colborne chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society, and Mayor Vance Badawey raise the society's flag at city hall on Wednesday. April is cancer awareness month. Anyone interested in canvassing for the society can contact Pat Hookings at 905-835-0313.

DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

## Letters to the editor

### This is not democracy

Just occasionally action taken by our elected representatives is so totally overwhelming in its hypocrisy that commenting on it becomes hard.

Where does one begin?

Because it would make life easier for the well rewarded and unelected staff at Wainfleet township offices a staff report was on the agenda for the recent township council meeting suggesting that because the present meeting schedule was confusing to some members of the public who appeared before council, a system that gave the mayor and aldermen at least two weeks to deliberate over proposed township policy changes, some of great importance to the community, should be scrapped.

Instead there should be a schedule imposed that gave the township council just a single meeting in which to consider all new staff reports, debate them, then vote on them.

All in just one meeting.

The actual timeline is as follows,

your elected representatives receive their meeting agenda pack on a Friday.

They have a weekend to study all of the Staff Reports however long they may be.

Then on the Monday the staff (Yes the staff), convene their staff meeting to which your elected representatives are invited to discuss the agenda.

By Tuesday evening it will be a done deal. At the township meeting the council will approve any recommendation they have been given by their unelected staff without having any time to decide whether or not they really understand what is being done in their names.

The biggest hypocrisy of all this is that very few months ago this same council actually debated, then voted unanimously, to change the meeting format, so that the township council could have at least two weeks to consider each item that was presented to them before voting on it.

The two who argued most eloquently at that meeting that they needed at least two weeks to study

the staff reports before voting on an issue?

The same two who couldn't wait to join our mayor in now agreeing they don't need any time at all to decide the future fate of Wainfleet. This is not democracy.

It is so obvious that it is unelected staff, rather than those we elected, who are deciding our future.

In view of what harm has been done to Wainfleet in the past three and a half years I would suggest we propose a new name for Wainfleet township council, the Wainfleet Development Corporation Inc.

They only need a single meeting now to approve the next sub-division, the next condo, the next quarry. Easy, and it cuts out the middle man, the Wainfleet voter, tax payer and resident.

Andrew Watts  
Port Colborne



inport@wellandtribune.ca

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■ RARE OCCURRENCE: Mock-emergency turns real for pilot

# Plane flips over at Niagara Central Airport

ALLAN BENNER  
InPort News Staff

WELLAND — A mock-emergency landing resulted in a real one at Niagara Central Airport last weekend.

No one was injured when the Cessna 150 flipped over while attempting a landing at the airport at about 4:30 p.m. Bruce McRitchie, Welland Aero Centre president, said the mishap occurred when a student pilot and his instructor were practising emergency landings, gliding into the landing strip with the engine off.

"They ended up coming in short of the runway and flipping upside down," he said.

If it had occurred in mid-summer and the ground was firm, McRitchie said they would have probably been unscathed by the incident.

"If the ground had been hard, it would have been a non-event."

Normally, if a plane touches down before reaching the asphalt, it just rolls along the ground, McRitchie said in pointing out that in this case, since the ground was still soft, the landing gear dug in and the plane flipped over.

Incidents like that occur very rarely at the airport, he said.

McRitchie said the student, whom he wouldn't identify, had already accumulated about 15 hours of experience at the controls of an airplane. The emergency landing training is a requirement prior to a student's solo flight.

"You have to learn that sort of thing before you go solo, so that should be over happen to you when you are solo, then you would have the knowledge and experience to put

the plane into the correct glide and pick the spot where you're going to land."

Although McRitchie said both the instructor and student were "fine" following the incident, the \$25,000 Cessna was smashed beyond repair.

"Big time. It's junk," McRitchie said the loss should be

covered by his company's insurance.

He said the plane has already been taken apart.

"The only way you can get it when it's upside down is to take the wings off and roll it over and bring it in," he said.

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AUDREY McDONOUGH, B.A., R.H.N., N.N.C.P.



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■ **AWARDS:** Nominate someone for a Niagara Region Environmental Award

# Know someone doing their part to better their community?

KAESHA FORAND  
InPort News Staff

**WELLAND** — The region is searching for Niagara's greenest families, businesses and individuals with green thumbs or a passion for conserving our precious green space.

Don Campbell, a planner with the region's integrated community planning, said the Niagara Region Environmental Awards began in 1989 with a volunteer award and has since bloomed to include seven awards.

Last year the region received 32 nominations. The

upper-tier municipality encourages residents to nominate family members, friends or neighbours who are doing their part to better the community.

"There are a lot of things they can do, including waste management, recycling, hydro and water conservation, using alternative energy, not using pesticides or naturalizing," Campbell said. "There are quite a number of things that people can do. You find families that do some amazing things."

Nominees are judged on three types of contributions: conserving the existing environment by actively protecting wood areas, wetlands or water quality; restoring or

improving natural environment by planting trees or setting up bird boxes; and increasing public awareness.

"Young people in schools are particularly aware. There's more awareness and understanding with lots of interesting and neat things done."

Campbell believes awards, such as the ones presented by the region, help express the community's appreciation for what groups and individuals are doing to reduce their carbon footprint and enhance green space.

"The awards can encourage others to become involved and take initiatives."

Any resident in Niagara can be nominated, except for employees of the region. Nominations are reviewed by a sub-committee of the Niagara region ecological and environmental committee.

Winners receive certificates, which will be presented in June. Nomination forms are available at [www.niagararegion.ca](http://www.niagararegion.ca) and can be submitted to [don.campbell@niagararegion.ca](mailto:don.campbell@niagararegion.ca) or mailed to Campbell, Integrated Community Planning, Niagara Region P.O. Box 1042, 2201 St. David's Rd. Thorold, Ont. L2V 4T7. The deadline for submissions is Friday, April 23.

[kforand@wellandtribune.ca](mailto:kforand@wellandtribune.ca)



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# FOGGY WEATHER: Nice days ahead



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Warm weather and the cool waters of Lake Erie combined to create fog at Sherkston Shores last week.



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## ARTS PLACE: Gallery showcases local artists

# Silent auction coming up

InPort News

PORT COLBORNE — It's still Tea Time at Arts Place Gallery. Gallery founder Joyce Honsberger says Tea For Two: The Collection of Tea Time Art, continues on until Sunday, April 11, at the Port Colborne gallery. The artwork, a mix of watercolours and acrylics, with styles that include still life, nature and landscape, is from a collective of Dunnville artists. When

the exhibit wraps up, Honsberger says Arts Place will prepare for its annual silent auction. The auction takes place Sunday, April 18, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., with a preview of the work on April 16 and 17. Arts Place Gallery is at 714 King St. and is open Thursdays to Sundays from noon until 5 p.m. For more information call Honsberger at 905-889-1519.

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■ **COFFEE HOUSE:** Students to perform

# Toastmasters at Port High

JAIMI SWANSON  
For InPort News

**PORT COLBORNE** — Port Colborne High School is holding a coffee house event on Wednesday, April 21 in the school's front foyer.

The event is being held from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and will feature a mixture of dancing and singing performances, created by students.

Teacher Amy Converse's improv team will be doing some dramatic comedy performances, along with the vocal class's group frequency.

Frequency will be doing a few different numbers throughout the evening. There will be a few soloists from the group including

recent "Blue Bear Idol" winner Sarah Boulton. When the performances are over, the rest of the night will be open mic to anyone.

...

Toastmasters has come to Port Colborne High School.

Wayne Buchkowski and Dianne Yungblut started a Youth Leadership Program at the high school and began the 10-week Toastmasters program on March 25.

In an introduction, Buchkowski said that the idea of the program is to give encouragement, improve student's public speaking and most importantly gain confidence.

"What you put in, is what you get out,"

Buchkowski told current Toastmasters members. The introduction meeting consisted of explaining the program and meeting every one involved, not only that but also electing the officer positions for the organization for the duration of the program.

Port High has a lot of different clubs and organizations that students take part in. Some of the clubs involve students being leaders within their peer groups and challenge them in making public speeches and announcements.

Buchkowski said Toastmasters gives students a chance to work solely on their personal confidence and speaking skills.

He said this kind of opportunity does not come around everyday, but will be available to students once a week at the school.

"One of the reasons I am doing this, you students are our future I strongly believe in that."

Jaimi Swanson is a Port Colborne High School student who writes for InPort News.

■ **2010 MUNICIPAL ELECTION**

## Throwing his hat back into the political ring

MARYANNE FIRTH  
InPort News Staff

**PORT COLBORNE** — After a seven year absence from city council, Yvon Doucet is ready to once again throw his hat in the ring.

Doucet spent 13 years representing Ward 2 as a Port Colborne city councillor, retiring seven years ago due to a medical condition that limited his mobility.

"I felt I couldn't service the people of the ward properly," he told The Tribune Monday from his Ward 2 home.

During his absence from council chambers, Doucet has had both knees replaced and is now feeling "better than ever" and ready to reclaim his seat.



Yvon Doucet

see SERVED | Page 9

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■ SERVED FOR 13 YEARS: Doucet no stranger to politics

# 'Serving the people drives me'

FROM PAGE 8

He said he'd always hoped to return to the public sector but wanted to be physically able to take on the role before doing so.

"If I can't do the job right, I'd rather not do it at all. I took some time to fix what needed to be fixed."

Before his retirement, Doucet worked for 33 years as an educator, with his last role being vice-principal at Alexander Kuska Catholic School. Even after his retirement he has remained active in the community through a number of groups including Caisse Populaire and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

In his spare time, Doucet often walks

through the ward speaking with residents and gaining feedback about city issues. He said he received a lot of positive feedback from people hoping to see him back in office.

"I want to continue serving the people. Serving the people drives me," he said.

With current Ward 2 Coun. Domenic Ursini announcing he will not seek re-election, Doucet said he saw his opportunity to get involved in city council once again.

He credited Ursini for "working diligently" to serve the Ward 2 constituents and thanked him for his dedication.

To help familiarize himself with the city's current issues, Doucet has been attending council and budget meetings for a year and

a half in an effort to prepare for the October elections.

"A lot of good it does to run if you don't know the issues," said the 59-year-old.

"If you're not part of the process, it's hard to make changes from the outside. I want to be part of the system," Doucet said.

His priorities will include ensuring continued fiscal responsibility and investment in older infrastructure for better and more efficient service to citizens.

Doucet and wife Carole have lived in Ward 2 for the last 37 years.

They have two children, Eric, 31, and Luc, 28, and three grandchildren.

[mjfirh@wellandtribune.ca](mailto:mjfirh@wellandtribune.ca)

**"If you're not part of the process, it's hard to make changes from the outside. I want to be part of the system."**

Yvan Doucet



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■ **AN 'AHA' MOMENT:** Wainfleet photographer gives Lakeshore Catholic High School students tips

# Everything just 'clicked' for photographer

InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Everyone has an 'aha' moment in their life.

April Jeffs' moment came as she and her husband were driving past Westside Mall on Hwy. 58 years ago.

It was just after the birth of her first son and after she had seen a T.V. piece profiling a female photographer.

"We were driving ... and I thought, 'I totally want to do this.' Everything just clicked," Jeffs told a group of Lakeshore Catholic High School photography students Tuesday.

The Wainfleet-based photographer and owner of April Jeffs Lakeside Studio was invited to speak to photography teacher Deanna Williams' class about her experiences as a photographer and her career.

After her 'aha' moment, Jeffs started taking photography class at Niagara College.

"My husband had a film camera and I played around with that."

Her first photos were taken for friends and family and then she branched out into wedding photography and

portraits. Weddings are her favourite thing to shoot, despite the stress involved because there's really only one chance to get it right.

Having that high energy level and putting people at ease, she said, is key to making weddings, or any photography situation, work for the photographer and the people involved.

"There's nothing better than having someone who is not crazy about their appearance come back and tell me they were blown away by the photos."

While having her own 'style' and admiring those photographers who are very creative and think outside of the box, Jeffs said there is a place for 'traditional' photography in her work.

"When I do engagement shots people say they want the fun, goofy shots, but when it comes down to it, they usually like the 'traditional' engagement shot."

Jeffs told students one of the best pieces of advice she received from a photography teacher was to look for different angles, to get down on the ground and get dirty in pursuit of a shot. She followed that advice and when she



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Grade 11 Lakeshore Catholic High School photography student Taylor Thompson, left, looks over a photo with April Jeffs, of April Jeffs Lakeside Studio.

shoots weddings now, she'll crawl around on the ground to get a shot.

While weddings and portraits are her bread and butter, Jeffs has ventured into other areas of photography.

She took action photos of a Wainfleet hockey team recently and said while it wasn't normally what she shoots, she had fun taking the photos.

Jeffs said taking band shots before the Niagara Music Awards was one of the more interesting things she has done.

"It was pretty cool," Jeffs said of shooting the awards show.

She said if students want to pursue photography, they should get themselves a decent digital camera and use the Internet as a resource to see how to shoot various subjects.

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■ **WARD 2:** Councillor won't seek re-election in October

# Ursini stepping down

MARYANNE FIRTH  
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — After seven years, Ward 2 Councillor Domenic Ursini has decided to step down from his seat in council chambers.

Ursini announced last week that he will not be seeking re-election in October.

After seven years, it's time to pass on the role of Ward 2 councillor, he said, adding he's proud of what he accomplished during his time in the elected position.

"I've achieved a lot of what I wanted to achieve, but it's time to pass on the reins to someone else."

Ursini said he'll be "taking the next little while to look at future opportunities" and how to continue to "best serve the community."

When asked if he had any intentions to seek the Conservative nomination in the Welland riding, which includes Port Colborne, Ursini said he

has yet to make any decisions.

"I'm going to take some time to think," he said, adding when a decision is reached he'll be sure to inform the public.

Ursini said it's been an honour to serve his constituents over the years.

"It's very humbling to have your community put its trust in you."

He plans to continue to "go full force" until his term is completed and a new council is elected on Oct. 25.

"I have a responsibility to them, to be at that table to get their needs across," he said.

Ursini is hopeful that Port Colborne's future city council will look "at the big picture" and be fiscally prudent as they move forward with the city's finances.

During his time on council, Ursini campaigned for fiscal responsibility from the city.

He helped to create Port Colborne's Whistleblower policy and fought for the creation of a finance committee that over-

sees city hall's spending and is tasked with finding savings.

In 2004, he was the only councillor to vote against giving council a pay hike — donating his increased wages to local community groups.

At the end of this term, \$6,500 will have been donated to the air and sea cadets, Port Colborne museum and Port Colborne High School's music program.

Ursini said he's thankful for the advice and support he received from constituents to help make Port Colborne a better place.

"Together, we made city hall more fiscally responsible and accountable."



Domenic Ursini

[mfirth@wellandtribune.ca](mailto:mfirth@wellandtribune.ca)

■ **FUTURE CARPENTERS:** Students learning to build

DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Students Matthew Pyatt, left, and Aaron Shute, right, hold planter boxes on a bench that construction technology teacher Tino Nuccitelli is sitting on. Lakeshore Catholic High School students made the boxes and bench as part of the specialist high skills majors program.

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 The Pink Warriors are a group of Port Colborne women dedicated to raising funds for women's cancer research. For more information on the event or to inquire about renting a table at the show, please contact Pat by phone at 905-835-0371 or by e-mail pink-warriors\_portcolborne@hotmail.com.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 15**  
**YOUNG & WILD AN ONTARIO REPTILE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM:** At Port Colborne Public Library from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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**THURSDAY, MAY 6**  
**THE WINGER-WAINFLEET WOMEN'S INSTITUTE** is holding its meeting titled making history at 1:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room at the Wainfleet Arena. For more information contact Elizabeth at 905-899-4872.

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■ **AUTHOR:** Former Port Colborne High School teacher talks to journalism class students

# Bringing the Blizzard of '77 to Niagara College



George Duma  
BY GEORGE

When Erno Rossi's name is mentioned, inevitably the term White Death is close behind.

It's nothing personal against the Port Colborne author.

It's just that Erno released the first edition of his classic book in 1978, more than a year after the legendary Blizzard of '77, upon which the book is based.

These days, folks around town recognize Erno by the huge red Dodge Ram pickup truck he drives, with the book's title and his website address laid out in big white letters across the tailgate.

During the past 32 years, Erno has sold more than 100,000 copies of his self-published compilation of what people went through during the four-day period the blizzard swept in.

He has since written another book, *Crystal Beach: The Good Old Days* about the glory era of the iconic park that, for more than 100 years, was the favoured Lake Erie playground for millions of folks from southern Ontario and the Buffalo-Niagara Falls, N.Y. area.

This, of course, before it was torn down in the 1990s to make way for the condos that now occupy the amusement park's former site.

Last week, Erno was gracious enough to pay a visit to the first-year journalism students at Niagara College.

I've known Erno for years and have grown quite fond of him over that time.

We don't see each other often

but when we do, I always enjoy his company. He was so extremely supportive when I left a secure career three years ago to venture into a new world of teaching at Niagara College. As a retired history and sociology teacher, he knows and understands this teaching thing and his support was invaluable. We should never forget or take for granted the kindnesses of others.

I always thought he would be a perfect guest speaker for a journalism class but I never wanted to impose on him. As a non-fiction author, he brings a perspective on journalism which I was sure students would be open to. After all, non-fiction is simply a longer form of journalism. Rather than writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper, a non-fiction writer composes and compiles stories that take a broader look at a subject. The research also takes a lot longer to gather. The premise, though, is the same.

One evening, while out for a stroll along the beautiful Lake Erie walkway that runs parallel to Lakeshore Road West, I saw a tall figure in a hat coming my way. In the dusk, I couldn't make out who it was until he was almost right next to me. Erno and I ended up walking together that evening, chatting about his books, the college and other topics. I asked if he would come to the college to speak and he graciously agreed.

From the outset of his presentation to the class, it was clear the students came prepared to listen and learn.

After giving them some background on his early years and some of his travels around the world, Erno explained the background of the Blizzard of '77 that hit. After all, none of these folks would have yet when the blizzard hit. By now, most of us know the

story.

Here's how Erno's website describes it: "On Friday, January 28, 1977 a natural disaster struck Canada and the United States. Southern portions of ... Ontario and parts of western and northern New York State were besieged by the blizzard of the century and millennium. During this winter hurricane, the temperature plunged to near zero Fahrenheit as hurricane force winds roared across the frozen surface of Lake Erie. Temperature and wind combined to create a wind chill of 60 below zero. Visibility was also zero and remained there from 11:30 a.m. on the 28th until 12:50 a.m. on the 29th of January. The storm did not subside until February.

Wind gusts over 50 miles (about 80 km) per hour occurred each day with official peaks ranging between 69 and 73 miles (about 120 km) per hour."

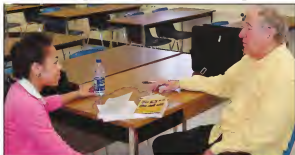
Erno described the view from his Tennessee Avenue home.

"I was looking out the window of my lakeshore home," he said. Using a pair of binoculars, he watched as a flock of Canada geese ate corn he had spread out earlier on the frozen lake just a short bit away from the window.

"Suddenly the geese all collapsed on their breasts onto the ice facing into the breeze. They then pulled their feet up into their breast feathers. Twisting their necks backwards, they then tucked their bills and heads into their back feathers."

"I looked out onto the frozen lake. I saw a wall of white as high as a mountain flowing across the ice toward the geese and my house. That wall of snow hit my house with hurricane force and almost shattered the bay windows. The blizzard of the century had arrived."

As the storm settled in and



GEORGE DUMA InPort News Photo  
Port Colborne author Erno Rossi offers advice to first-year Niagara College journalism student Sabine Dunac after his recent presentation to students at the college's Welland campus.

weakened its havoc, Erno feared for the geese and believed the worst for them. "On the fourth and final day of the storm, I tucked my camera inside my parka and waited for a clearing in the blowing snow. I then carved across the snow toward the geese" and he snapped photos that would later appear in his book.

Then something happened that only Mother Nature could explain. "Later on that fourth day, during another clearing in the storm, those same geese all stood up, strutted about, flapped their wings and then took flight toward the open water of the Niagara River."

"The blizzard of the millennium had ended."

Of course, before it was over, the Blizzard of '77 would claim dozens of Canadian and American lives. It was a horrible tragedy that affected thousands of families.

Erno has taken that tragedy and, with his book, kept it alive for future generations. Again, it's what good journalism does, keeps

events alive for posterity.

Since his presentation, a couple of students have come up to me and expressed an interest in writing a book. Such is the effect of a good guest speaker.

I've been in touch with Erno by e-mail since his visit to the college. In his latest correspondence, he wrote: "A question that I'm always asked here in Port Colborne is, 'When are you going to speak in your home town of Port Colborne?' As soon as I'm asked, 'is my answer.'"

So, if your service club or group is on the lookout for a guest speaker you need not go any farther than our town.

For details on how to get a hold of him, contact Erno's website at [www.whitedeath.com](http://www.whitedeath.com).

George Duma is a resident of Port Colborne and has spent 30 years in the newspaper business. He is currently a member of the journalism faculty at Niagara College. He welcomes comments and column suggestions and can be reached at [gduma@ccreg.ca](mailto:gduma@ccreg.ca).

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Beds include: Lateral pull-out, on-  
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Great Location and Features  
to Enjoy Your Retirement!  
On Bus Route, 1 Block to Welland Plaza.  
Call for more info! (866) 735-0483

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**NEW AD**  
BACHETTE 3550 + hydro,  
furnished, and re-  
modded. Heat & water  
paid. Close to down-  
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or email christina.kosch@centra.ca

### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**Great Value!**  
1, 2 & 3 BDRM near  
downtown Welland.  
Call for more info.  
No. 10505. (905) 717-  
6628 or (905) 633-9553

### Must See

**Unique**  
Call for more info.  
May/June 1st, \$825.  
All units include:  
Lowly suites in metal  
building. Special  
amenities, laundry  
facilities, laundry  
room. Call for more info.  
955-414-3328  
viewing by appointment  
Amn/Inv/vis/vis

### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**1 & 2 BDRM APT**  
BUILDING  
26 MILL ST.  
New floor for  
tenants to move in.  
Call for more info.  
OPEN HOUSE  
Everyday 10-5  
Call for more info.  
905-331-8664 or  
905-732-9141

### Must See!

1, 2 & 3 BDRM apt. in  
Welland. Newly Reno'd  
+ clean. Call 268-8200.  
6036.

### Must See!

1, 2 & 3 BDRM apt. in  
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### Must See!

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### Apartment Unfurnished A610

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hydro. Ready now.  
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### Must See!

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Welland. Newly Reno'd  
+ clean. Call 268-8200.  
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### Must See!

1, 2 & 3 BDRM apt. in  
Welland. Newly Reno'd  
+ clean. Call 268-8200.  
6036.

### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**2 BDRM** Newly renovated  
floor 5550 + month +  
hydro. Ready now.  
905-735-2555

### Must See!

1, 2 & 3 BDRM apt. in  
Welland. Newly Reno'd  
+ clean. Call 268-8200.  
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### Must See!

1, 2 & 3 BDRM apt. in  
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### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**CUTE 2 bdrm** balcony  
mud, 1st floor, 1st floor  
ref. 905-246-7595

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### Must See!

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### Must See!

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### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**EAST MAN 2 BDRM**  
\$695 utilities incl.  
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Welland. Newly Reno'd  
+ clean. Call 268-8200.  
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### Must See!

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### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**2 BDRM** main floor apt  
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Fridge/dishwasher  
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### Apartment Unfurnished A610

**1 ROOM**, air, kitchenette,  
bath, living room, dining  
room, laundry, working  
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**1 ROOM**, air, kitchenette,  
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SAVE \$1.00

**3.99** lb.

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SAVE \$2.00

**3.99** lb.

**D'ITALIANO BREAD**

675g loaf

**2/\$4**

**BRAVO SPAGHETTI SAUCE**

680 ml can

1/2 PRICE

**79¢**

12 can limit

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**PREMIUM 2-PLY BATHROOM TISSUE**

Pkg. of 12 Double Rolls

**4.99**

**GREEN GIANT VEGETABLES**

PEAS, NIBLETS, CREAM CORN,  
GREEN OR WAX BEANS

1.25 Lb. can

**\$1**

LIMIT 12

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**CHEERIOS**

685g box

SAVE \$4.00

**4.99**

PUPU'S BAKERY

Fresh Baked

**APPLE PIE**

SAVE \$4.00

**2.99**

620g pie

Stoney Creek Dairy

**ICE CREAM**

1.89 litre carton

**3/\$10**

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Box of 5 to 8

**2/\$4**

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1.2 Litre bottle

**2.99**

Charlize's

**THINSLATIONS**

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Lays

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235g bag

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1.59 litre

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SWEET RIPE

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LB.

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**JUMBO SIZE CAULIFLOWER or JUMBO SIZE CELERY**

1.99

EACH

■ ELM STREET LANDFILL

# New use for old landfill

MARYANNE FIRTH  
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Residents will soon be stopping to smell the roses instead of plugging their noses at the former Elm St. landfill.

Regional Council, Bob Saracino recently told Port Colborne council the former landfill will begin its transformation into a naturalization site as soon as April.

The compost/landfill facility was closed in Dec. 2008 as the result of ongoing complaints about the odour from both Dain City and Port Colborne residents.

The project will see the landfill transformed into a park-like setting similar to the Glenridge naturalization site in St. Catharines upon completion, he said.

Saracino said Niagara Region was expected to finalize the contract at a regional council meeting, awarding tender for the project to Stevensville Lawn Care Inc. at a cost of \$845,226.

Work is expected to commence in early April, he said, with a majority of the project nearing completion by the end of July. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

There will be a "notable change" in the topography of the 24-hectare site, Saracino said.

The contract will include tree and shrub planting, hydro-seeding, landscape structures and fencing.

Also included is the construction of a recreational trail, both paved and granular access roads, and the creation of a leash free dog park with separate areas for small and large dogs.

Coun. Gary Bruno said both the City of Welland and City of Port Colborne will be providing unneeded used fire hydrants to be placed in the dog park.

The completed project will feature a visitor's pavilion, viewing platform, and the planting of native plants and flowers.

Saracino said a lot of people have shown interest in the project, attending public meetings on the issue and sharing their input.

Residents have worked together with the region to find a solution satisfactory to everyone involved, he said.

"I'm excited to see it finally get underway," When asked by Ward 4 Coun. Kate Leigh about maintenance of the property, Saracino replied that it is a regional facility and will be maintained as such in partnership with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

Mayor Vance Badawey credited those involved in the project for their work in facilitating the design.

He said he appreciates work done on the project and the effort that's been put into making it a success.

When the region initially budgeted the cost of the transformation, only \$200,000 was allotted for the project, he said.

"The region took financial responsibility and has taken into consideration the input received from the public... to design a facility we can be proud of."

mfrith@wellandtribune.ca



Bob Saracino



Kate Leigh